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Free Newsletter

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Summer 2012

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Welcome... to the Summer edition of our quarterly newsletter. In this edition:

- > Socials, Tastings & Outings - Reports
- > Your Letters and E-mails
- > Portree & Stormoway review
- > Focus on - Tracy Tomlinson
- > Real Cider News
- > Pub & Brewery News
- > Updated Real Ale Pubs list
- > Updated Branch Diary

We welcome your letters, news, views and opinions. Let us know what is happening at your local, or tell us about pubs you have visited.

Thanks to all who have taken trouble to send in pub and beer reports, or articles, but especially to regulars Eric, Gareth, Steve and Jack, who keep us up-to-date with brews and what is happening in local pubs.

Please note that the editor reserves the right to edit contributions sent for publication. All marks and copyright are acknowledged.

August edition **deadline** is 1st September, with publication by October.

If you would like to place an advert, please contact one of the branch officers (see Diary page).

Advertising rates are as follows:

Full Page Advert..... £87.00

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There is a discount on placement of your fourth consecutive advert. Adverts are accepted on condition that inclusion does not necessarily imply an endorsement or approval of content.

An average of 3,500+ copies are distributed to CAMRA Branch members, to Highlands & Islands brewers, to Good Beer Guide listed and Real Ale pubs; plus extra copies to advertisers.

Doh! Summer is here and the Highlands will be alive with the sound of

tourists from near and far, sampling the wonderful sights and history that is on offer. Presumably, if you are a tourist and you are reading this edition of "What's Yours Then?" you are also enjoying the wonderful beers that are on offer from our local breweries in one or more of our excellent pubs or bars. Which brings me on to the "Doh". In the Spring edition, when we were able to publish the list of winning pubs in our huge, geographical area, I became confused (not unusual) and made an error—(again, not unusual,) as you will see later in this edition.)

Because our area is so big, we break it up into 8 districts as you can see in our pub list. The In-vernness & District South winner was in fact

The Bandstand Bar, Nairn, which was our branch POTY of last year. My apologies for the mistake. See if you can spot more mistakes in this edition.

Cheers, Enjoy! - Ed.

P.S. Thanks for all the positive comments on the new look.

Trading Standards Office: Contact details for issues such as no price lists or consistent short measures - 0845 600 4 222

e-mail - consumer.advice@highland.gov.uk

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SpringFest at The Benleva Hotel

From the 29th March to 1st April the Benleva Hotel held it's first SpringFest. Locals, tourists and friends from afar met up for a weekend of all things new (except Steve and Willie's jokes). This small festival brought together some of the newest breweries in Scotland; Loch Ness, Cromarty, Loch Lomond, River Leven, Barney's and Scottish Borders. There were also a couple of new beers; Cairngorm Mountain Blue and Foxfield Stout (guest English beer). New to the Hotel was the 6% Black Rat cider to keep the apple drinkers happy. Thursday night was Folk night where you could bring your instrument or voice and join in with the regular musicians – new young singer Keiragh did and she was an instant success. Friday was the ever popular and entertaining Quiz night, where 15 teams fought a tough contest. On the Saturday entertainment was provided by a new group to the Hotel, 'Vaguely Rajun,' with their excellent mix of Cajun/folk/pop music, which got the customers dancing. During Sunday afternoon Steve Crossland took 15 people through a bottle beer tasting event, with beers from Colonsay, Williams, Isle of Skye, Stewart and Brewdog breweries plus 3 from San Diego in America. These gave



Chairman Eric presenting Steve and Allan with their certificates for area POTY and Highlands & Western Isles branch POTY

a wide range of strengths, tastes, styles and colours. [Bottled beers were bought from the new Tomlinson's, Castle Street, Beer Shop in Inverness]. One of the most unusual beers on offer over the weekend was Loch Ness 'Ness Un Korma' a..... yes you've guessed it, curry flavoured brew. Beer of the Festival, voted for by the customers, was Loch Ness 'Hoppy Ness'. Plans are to have this smaller Fest each year to compliment the much bigger Loch Ness Beer Festival in September.



Gordon and his son, Jordan of the Bandstand Bar, receive their certificate for their area POTY at their annual, 60 beers, Spring Beer Festival.



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Sir,
Having just read the latest issue (Spring 2012) of the What's Yours Then? newsletter I just wanted to

wish Gordon well in his new role as editor. Having read the "Focus On" feature I was left wondering what subject Gordon taught but after reading that "after more than 13 years, Orkney Brewery finally got round to brewing their No. 1 beer" comment on page 7 and that the brewery started in 1988 which is 24 years ago according to my calculation, I just hope he doesn't teach maths.

Cheers
Richard Jones
Orkney BLO

(DOH! - Ed.)

"The Great Inverness 1/2 pint **Rip Off**"

On my recent holiday in Inverness I came across a trend which seems to be creeping in, charging extra for a half pint than a pint equivalent. I have never met any landlord who could give a sensible answer as to why this practice takes place. I thought for readers of What's Yours Then I would give a run through of the good and the bad in Inverness.

This survey took place during week 14th-19th April.

	Half	Pint
Blackfriars	175p	325p
Number 27	165p	330p
Kings Highway	108p	215p
Castle Tavern	175p	335p
Hootananny	180p	360p
Jonny Foxes	185p	340p

As most of the above have pricelists for pints none seem to have prices listed for half which I think is misleading. I think

Good Beer Guide listed pubs which charge more for a half than a pint equivalent should not be entered in the GBG, they are ripping the public off.

Yours
Andrew Wright

2012 POTY:

Just to make sure everybody is clear, here is the correct list of our winners:

- Bandstand Bar, Nairn
- Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit
- Grog & Gruel, Fort William
- Cairn Hotel, Carrbridge
- Argyll Hotel, Ullapool
- Plockton Inn, Plockton
- Steinn Inn, Waternish
- Castle Hotel, Dornoch



Bits and Bobs
The Loch Ness

Brewery is expanding.

After less than a year in operation, and finding themselves struggling to keep up with demand, they have bought the building in Drumnadrochit which was The Blarmor Sports and Social Club. This has been empty for 2 years or more and work has already started to convert the bar area into a new, 8 barrel brewery and should be ready sometime in the summer. The present brewery will keep going on trial and small brews.

Let's hope it happens this summer! - ed.

Cromarty Brewery is building up a portfolio of brews. After the continuing success of **Happy Chappy**, then **Brewed Awakening** stout, Craig has continued his inspired experimenting and released **Red Rocker** which has some Rye in the mix. He has also tried his hand at a German Eisbock style beer of 6% which he called **Island**



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Shuffle. The brewery building also has a sign for passers by and deliveries now (see pic by our own Simon Urry). Craig



is using publicity technology well and the brewery web site, blog and twitter account keep all those who want to know, well informed.

One of our 210 branch members is also passionate about music. A retired music teacher, Pat Strachan can be found playing in various

venues, including, occasionally, the Castle Tavern in **The Black Isle Stompers** — a 5 piece band playing a range of jazz from rag-time, blues, Dixieland, swing and beyond.

The **Stronlossit Inn** in Roy Bridge near Fort William reports a surge in demand for real ales, dispensing Cask Marque quality beers from a rotating menu of usually, Fyne Ales, Houston, Orkney and Cairngorm.

The Westford Inn on North Uist reports plenty of tourists and they have stocked their cellar with casks of 7 different, mostly "Locale" beers and 15 other bottled, Scottish beers.

Wetherspoons Spring Beer Festival

Once again all 50 of the available ales



for this festival had been ordered by the Kings Highway in Inverness and this time round it was quite a battle to keep up with them.

Where the Autumn festival had seemed a little slow in moving through the beers, it was noticeable that 3 or 4 casks a day were changing in this latest one. Still, daily visits and the use, once again, of the 3 thirds for the price of a pint offer meant 47 of the 50 were tasted. (A new personal best!)

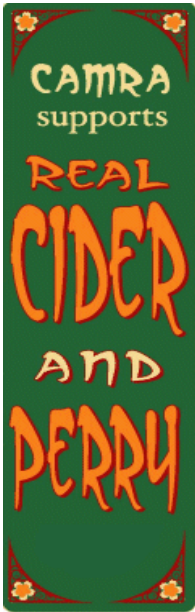
5 brews from international brewers were featured in the festival as well as some brewed for festival specials, although, like last time, there was a reduction in these giving a larger amount of regular brews from the featured breweries. Scotland was represented by four brewers.

Caledonian Coffee Porter 4.3% abv (7 out of 10), smooth and roasty with dark chocolate flavours and a hint of caramel. **Inveralmund** Duncan's IPA 4.4% (6), not as good as it can be with the normal tropical fruit hop flavours coming across as "dulled" down. **Cairngorm** Red Mountain 4.2% (8), an excellent full bodied best bitter with a good balance of malts, roast and hops which gave both fruitiness and bitterness. **Sinclair Atlas** Wayfarer. This 5% ver-

sion of Wayfarer was a great citrus hopped bitter Speciality ale and one of my festival favourites (8.5). Another top beer was **Zululand** Zulu Blonde. This beer was featured in Spring 2010 and was back by popular demand, this time brewed at Caledonian. I remember being less than complementary about this beer back then but I have to say this time it was superb. A 4.5% abv Golden Ale it had a balanced malt and honeyed fruit flavour with good dry late bitterness. (9)

The other international beers were, **Nogne O** Bitter 4.5% (7) from Norway brewed at Batemans which was a hoppy best bitter with background fruit flavours and a bitter finish, **John Martin's** Pale Ale 5.0% (8) from Belgium brewed at Marstons, a very good fruity/sweet strong bitter which had increasing bitterness in the after-taste.

Smuttnose Murrikan Mild 4.2% (5) from the USA brewed at Wadsworth was somewhat disappointing with a slightly soapy flavour and watery mouth feel. **Vasileostrovsky** Imperial Russian Stout (8) brewed at Bank's by Evgeny Tolstov, the first Russian brewery featured at a JDW festival. This brew was a smoky dry stout with a fruity "meatiness" and at 6.5% was dangerously drinkable. The Speciality style beers were not too weird and wonderful this time around. **Highgate** Bee-Zone 4.0% (7) had pale malt, some faint hop



Traditional Cider Matters

Real Cider and/or **Real Perry** is sold (or has recently been sold) in the following inns & hotels. (Please note that some may be seasonal outlets). Please let us know if you find additional outlets selling real cider or perry.

The Anderson, Fortrose - Thatchers Heritage Cider

Eagle - Inn on the Loch, Laggan Locks - Thatchers Original Cider

Stronlossit Inn, Roy Bridge - Thatchers Cheddar Valley Cider

Strathcarron Hotel - Thatchers Cider (rotated with cask ales)

Glen Hotel, Newtonmore - Westons Old Rosie or 1st Quality Cider

Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit - Westons 1st Quality Cider all year round, plus good selection of real ciders for September festival

Scourie Hotel - Two Westons Ciders on handpump

King's Highway, Inverness - Westons Old Rosie & Organic Draught Vintage Cider; Thatchers Heritage & Dry Cider

Alexander Bain, Wick - Westons Old Rosie & Organic Draught Vintage Cider; Thatchers Heritage & Dry Cider

Badachro Inn - Westons Cider is served here

Argyll Hotel, Ullapool - Westons ciders from the box

Altnacealgach Inn, nr Ledmore Junction - Mike & Kate are giving some thought to serving a real cider. (This outlet is For Sale so best to check. Tel: 01854 666260)

Torridon Inn - Westons Ciders are served in the bar.

Kinlochewe Hotel, at the foot of Beinn Eighe, is serving Westons 1st Quality Draft Cider

Clachaig Inn, Glencoe - An initial trial (at Mayfest 2010) but (with your support) continuing through the Winter, Westons cider on hand pump. Having had difficulties getting hold of the Thatchers we've had over the last few years we've been looking for a change. (From Website)

Bandstand Bar, Naim - Westons ciders on handpump.

Grog & Gruel, Fort William - has been selling Thatchers Heritage cask cider since 1st April 2010. On tap for as long as sales make it viable - could be all year round but unfortunately sales usually drop dramatically during winter months.

Glen Affric Bar, Cannich - serving Westons Cider after requests from hill-walking customers.



flavours with honey sweetness but wasn't over the top.

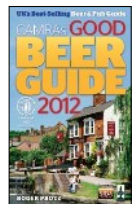
Thwaites Logan's Run 4.3% (6) was a refreshing fruit beer made with loganberries but was a bit too heavy on the fruit for me personally.

Bateman's Smokey Joe 4.8% (6) made with peat smoked malt was like drinking a mix of ale and Lagavulin whisky. **Springhead Willy's Wheatbeer** 5.0% (8) was a good Belgium style wheat beer with the familiar fruity and floral hop flavours

giving the slight bubblegum flavour you get with this style of beer.

Conway Lemon Ale 4.2% (7) which had all the signs of being a fruit infused beer i.e. lemons on the pump clip, turned out to be a refreshing Golden Ale with all the lemon flavour coming from Slovenian Bobeck hops.

34 of the pubs listed are in the *Good Beer Guide* - We cannot tell you which, you will have to buy the guide for that, but there is a chance you may find clues somewhere in this newsletter.





Plenty of other beers I could wax lyrical about but I will sum up with a few of my favourites. **Hawkshead** Windermere Pale 3.5% (8) was an excellent hoppy bitter with great flavour for its abv. **Saltire** Cream Stout 4.0% (8) was a tasty stout in the Cairngorm Black Gold style but without the slight smokiness you get with Black Gold. **Acorn** Old Moor Porter 4.4% (9) was a superb smokey porter with a liquorice soft bitterness and a good roast after-taste, **Moorhouse's** APA Special 4.8% (8) loads of tropical and peach hops made this a very tasty Golden Ale. **Wychwood** King Goblin 6.0% (8) is a ramped up version of the famous Hobgoblin and is normally only available in bottles. Allegedly only ever brewed under a full moon this was an easy drinking full bodied fruity strong ale. Although the above ales were among my favourites were they the best of the festival? I have a sneaky feeling 3 of the best beers were the ones I missed. To pop in nearly every day and still miss them shows how fast they went and I always think "punter" power is a good indication of the quality of a beer. So I will keep my eyes open for them if I see them around. The condition of the beers considering the throughput was extremely good with all beers worthy of 3's and 4's on the CAMRA quality scale.

Two exceptions, **Hilden** Scullion's Irish Ale (2) and surprisingly the Zulu Blonde (1) which had out-stayed it's welcome on the top bank of handpumps when I tried it again. Manager Mark normally keeps these pumps for the popular Deuchars and Abbot and features all the guests on the lower bank of 5 hand-pumps. It still goes to show even when there is a festival on customers will not venture up to the top bank to see what else is on. One other slight blip was the service on the last Friday evening of the festival when I gave up waiting due to the queues. Many of us probably remember this as a constant problem in the past at Wetherspoons but thankfully under the current manager this a much rarer occurrence. For lovers of pears and apples there was a good selection of cider and perry. Two from **Gwynt Y Ddraig** in Wales, a perry and the award winning Black Dragon, Four from **Westons**, two from **Thatchers** plus a couple of others. A very enjoyable festival and I am already looking forward to the Autumn one, well done to everyone at the Kings Highway. And no, I would not leave you in limbo over the missed beers. They were **Rudgate** IPA 5.2%, **Kelham Island** Wild Rider IPA 5.5% and **Phoenix** March Hare 4.4%. Cheers,
GNH

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Strathspey trip in sunny March.

A cool but fine morning saw the full minibus leave Inverness for one of our shorter trips. First stop was at the **Cairngorm Brewery** in Aviemore, where Brewery Manager Sean Tomlinson welcomed us. After presentation of yet more certificates for their



Social Secretary, Arnie presenting Sean with the beer award certificates.

excellent beers, we had a guided tour, showing the ever-expanding brewery. We ended up in what will be the bottling plant, as soon

as the equipment arrives, and tasted their new Mountain Blue 4.3% hoppy bitter plus 4.2% Howler and 4.7% White Lady. Sean then went through even more expansion plans and then we had to drag ourselves away. Across the road to the **Dalfaber Country Club** where Cairngorm Tradewinds and Nessies Monster Mash were available. They were a bit cold but still tasty. Down into Aviemore and **The Winking Owl** where we had Cairngorm Wildcat (good) and Caledonian Deuchars (not at it's best). Then onto the **Cairngorm Hotel** for more Cairngorm beers, this time Gold and Stag, which were both in excellent form. Under the railway to **The Old Bridge Inn** where we had an excellent Cairngorm Roggen (made using Rye), a 4.5% Scottish Black-country festival beer from Cairngorm which was good and no one tried Deuchars. By this time we were making use of the outdoor



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seating as the sun, yes the sun, was out. This seating area had leather arm chairs (and a piano!), which unfortunately we had to leave as another pub called.

The Topsy Laird in Kingussie was next and although had two pumps there was no real ale available. **The Silver Fjord Hotel** had a very good Cairngorm Tradewinds and the **Duke of Gordon Hotel** now has two hand-pumps with two excellent Cairngorm beers; Tradewinds and Black Gold (although the first ones out were a bit flat). Into nearby Newtonmore and **The Glen Hotel** which had Cairngorm Mountain Blue, Wm Youngers No3 and Deuchars all in fine form. Again the sun was still out, so outdoor seating again. Time to start our return journey and first stop was the **Suie** at Kinraig which had 3 Cairngorm beers available; Tradewinds, Wildcat and Black Gold, all in excellent form. The evening was getting cooler now as the sun went down and the large range fire was lit. Onto **The Cairn Hotel** in Carrbridge where

they were presented with their area Pub of the Year certificate. Black Isle Red Kite was



Secretary, Gareth presenting the area POTY certificate to owner Gareth and 2 of his staff at The Cairn Hotel.

just finishing as we entered so we had very good Cairngorm Wildcat and Loch Ness, from the newish(ness) brewery of the same name. We were back in Inverness at 20:00 and a fine day was had by all. Thanks to Frasers Minibus of Munloch and our excellent, patient driver.

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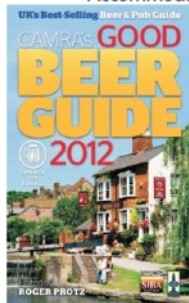
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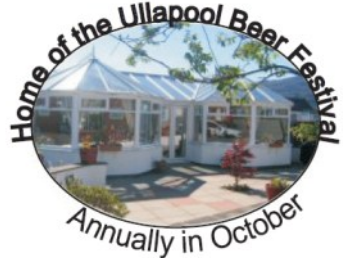
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Tasting meeting update

A tasting evening at the Anderson in Fortrose is always one that is looked forward to as landlord (and self confessed beer geek) Jim, as well as enjoying the beer banter strives to put on something a little bit different. So in April we walked into the cosy public bar to be greeted with three pump clips which just displayed the numbers 1,2, and 3. As they probably weren't going to be Orkney No 1 or Younger's No 3 (couldn't think of one for 2) it was going to be a fun evening for the eight strong group trying to guess them.

First up was a golden coloured ale which had an alcoholic aroma with a hint of apple fruit and some caramel. A sweet taste which turned to a slightly more bitter finish was predominately caramel and fruit. The alcoholic strength came through in the taste although there was a division amongst the tasters as regards the abv with guesses ranging from 5% to 7.5%. As to the beer and brewery it came from suggestions ranged from Highland, to Isle of Skye Cuillin Beast and Hebridean Berserker. No correct answers as the beer was a completely new one from **Strathaven Ales**. Called **500** to celebrate their 500th brew it was a barley wine style at 7.0%. Quite drinkable considering it's strength it managed a score of 7 (out of 10).

Beer number two was a red/brown coloured brew which had all the signs of being a "hop monster" judging by the intense aroma of hops and fruit in the nose. Apart from some faint malt and caramel that was it. Onto the taste and it was indeed full on hops with some malt, caramel and a hint of roasted grain. Sweet at first it turned to a dry, hoppy more bitter finish. The hop intensity made a couple of the tasters think of Brewdog from Fraserburgh. In fact this was a brew much closer to home as it was the latest offering

from the **Cromarty** brewery. **Red Rocker** is a 5% speciality ale made with rye. As a beer it is quite unbalanced which led it to get an average score of 5. This may have been a bit mean as speciality beers in their own right are supposed to be different from the mainstream ales, plus a couple of the tasters have tried this beer again and commented that it has grown on them. Whatever way you look at it, it is certainly a beer worth looking out for and trying.

Last beer on the pumps was a copper coloured brew with an aroma which was dominated by peach and tropical fruit flavours. A sweetish start in the flavour turned to a hoppy bitter finish which had a fair alcoholic kick to it. A correct guess of **Highland Brewery** was recorded but no idea of the beer.

This was revealed to be a new one from Rob Hill called **The Duke**, a 5.2% IPA. Scores recorded gave it an average of just below 8.

So that was our three mystery beers, all cunningly picked by Jim to be all new that month.

Just to keep the mystery theme going he popped to the cellar and bought up a jug of golden ale.

Pear and tropical fruits in the aroma accompanied the fruity, hoppy refreshing bitter over sweet flavour. Again none of the tasters identified the beer which was the latest offering from **Orkney Brewery**, the 4.1% **Corncrake**. Scores around the table gave it an average of 7.5 giving our beer of the evening status, by a whisker to **Highland's The Duke**.

We stayed for a couple more beers with people choosing their personal favourite of the evening before heading home. Many thanks again to Jim at The Anderson for hosting another splendid evening.

(Tastings meetings are always an education and good fun—Ed.)



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Real Ale Pubs List

These Inns and Hotels are known to sell (or to have recently sold) cask-conditioned ale. Please let us know about the quality of real ales on offer, particularly if you think Good Beer Guide inclusion is merited. We make no claims as to the quality of the beer, and you should note that some of the pubs listed may only stock real ale on a seasonal **(S)** basis:



We have taken the liberty of listing some pubs which fall within adjoining Branch Areas - Glasgow & West of Scotland (G&WS), Aberdeen & Northern Isles (A&NI) - but which are not very far from our "border" and merit a visit.

Inverness & District North

The Anderson, Fortrose
Aultguish Inn
Benleva Hotel, Drumnadrochit
Clachnaharry Inn, Inverness
Castle Hotel, Portmahomack
Commercial Inn, Balintore (S)
Conon Bridge Hotel
Cromarty Arms
Glen Affric Bar, Cannich
Glenmoriston Arms Hotel, Invermoriston
Inchbae Lodge Hotel, Garve
Loch Ness Inn, Lewiston
Munlochry Hotel (TP)
National Hotel, Dingwall
Old North Inn, Inchmore
Palace Hotel, Inverness
Plough Inn, Rosemarkie
Richmond Hotel, Strathpeffer
Royal Hotel, Cromarty
Slaters Arms, Cannich
Station Hotel, Avoch
Steading Bar & Restaurant, Kilmartin (TP)
Struy Inn, Strathglass, near Cannich
Struy Inn (S) (TP)
Waterfront, Inverness

TP - Served using top pressure

Inverness & District South

Bandstand Bar, Braeval Hotel, Naim
Blackfriars, Inverness
Bothy, Fort Augustus
The Caledonian, Inverness
Caledonian Hotel, Fort Augustus (S)
Castle Tavern, Inverness
Cawdor Tavern, Cawdor
Claymore Hotel, Naim
The Corner Grill, Inverness
Dores Inn
The Exchange, Inverness
Golf View Hotel, Naim (TP)
Heathmount Hotel, Inverness
Hootananny, Inverness
Innes Bar, Inverness
Johnny Foxes, Inverness (TP)
Kings Highway, Inverness (*Wetherspoons*)
Lock Inn, Fort Augustus
Lovat Arms Hotel, Fort Augustus
Nico's Bar, Glen Mhor Hotel, Inverness
Number 27, Inverness
Old Mill Inn, Brodie (A&NI)
Phoenix Bar, Inverness
Ramada Jarvis Hotel, Inverness (TP)
Seaforth Club, Naim (Members only) (TP)
Snowgoose, Inverness
Whitebridge Hotel, Loch Ness South

Fort William & Lochaber

Alexandria Hotel, Fort William
Ben Nevis Bar, Fort William
Ben Nevis Hotel, Fort William
Ben Nevis Inn, Fort William
Clachaig Inn, Glencoe (G&WS)
Chlachain Inn, Mallaig
Cobbs at Nevisport, Fort William
Corran Ferry Hotel, Onich
Crofters Bar & Restaurant, Fort William
The Eagle, Laggan Locks
(*An inn on a barge on the Caledonian Canal*)
Four Seasons, Onich
Glenfinnan House Hotel
Grog & Gruel, Fort William
Glen Nevis Restaurant & Bar
Glenuig Inn, Lochailort
Glenuig Village Hall

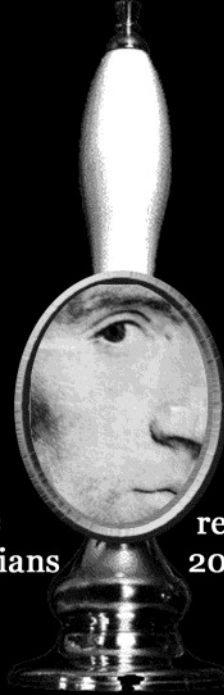
Ice Factor, Kinlochleven
 Invergarry Hotel
 Kings House Hotel, Glencoe (G&WS)
 Laroch Bar, Ballachulish (G&WS)
 Letterfinlay Lodge Hotel, Loch Lochy
 Lochailort Inn (TP)
 Loch Oich Restaurant/Bar, South Laggan
 Loch Leven Hotel, Ballachulish (G&WS)
 Loch Shiel Hotel, Acharacle
 MacDonald Hotel, Kinlochleven
 Mamore Lodge, Kinlochleven (S)
 Moorings Hotel, Banavie
 Old Forge, Inverie
 Old Station Restaurant, Spean Bridge
 Roy Bridge Hotel
 Steam Inn, Mallaig
 Stronlossit Hotel, Roy Bridge
 Tomdoun Sporting Lodge
 West End Hotel, Fort William
 West Highland Hotel, Mallaig

Aviemore & Cairngorms

Ben Mhor Hotel, Grantown-on-Spey
 Boat Hotel, Boat of Garten
 Craig Bar, Grantown-on-Spey
 Cairngorm Hotel, Aviemore
 Cairn Hotel, Carrbridge
 Croft Inn, Glenlivet (A&NI)
 Dalfaber Country Club, Aviemore
 Duke of Gordon Hotel, Kingussie
 Glen Avon Hotel, Tomintoul (A&NI)
 Glen Hotel, Newtonmore
 Glenmore Lodge, Nr Aviemore
 Highlander Inn, Craigellachie (A&NI)
 Kingussie Golf Club
 Loch Insh Boathouse, Nr Aviemore
 Lodge Hotel, Newtonmore (TP)
 Mash Tun, Charlestown of Aberlour (A&NI)
 Muckrach Lodge Hotel, Dulnain Bridge
 Old Bridge Inn, Aviemore
 Seafeld Lodge Hotel, Grantown-on-Spey
 Silver Fjord Hotel, Kingussie
 Suie Hotel, Kincaig
 Topsy Laird, Kingussie
 Winking Owl, Aviemore

“a beer drinker’s
 mecca”

Good Beer Guide since 2005



real ale
 80 Belgians

real cider
 200 malts

Highlands & Western Isles

Pub of the Year 2008

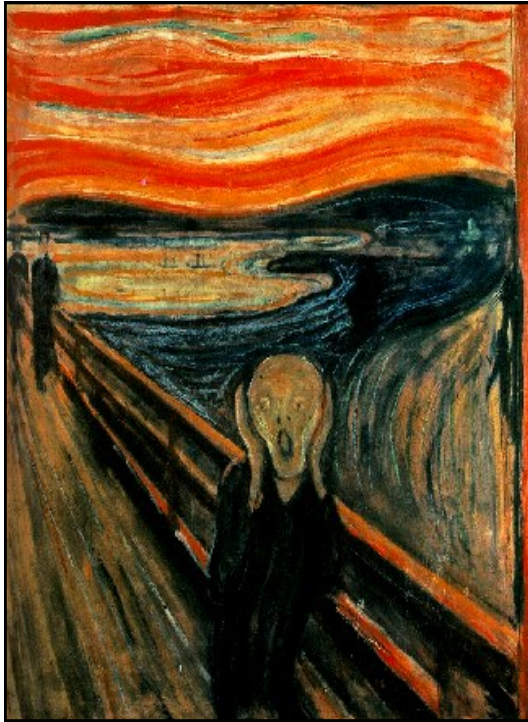
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his local had run out of
Loch Ness Beer*

2. loch
ness
brewery

*for more info and beer range
go to
www.lochnessbrewery.com*

Wester Ross

Applecross Inn
Arch Inn, Ullapool
Argyll Hotel, Ullapool
Aultbea Hotel
Badachro Inn
Ceilidh Place, Ullapool
Summer Isles Hotel, Achiltibuie (S)
Drumchork Hotel, Aultbea (S)
Dundonnell Hotel
Ferry Boat Inn, Ullapool
Glendale House, South Erradale (S)
Kinlochewe Hotel
Lochcarron Hotel, Lochcarron
Loch Maree Hotel
Millcroft Hotel, Gairloch
Morefield Motel, Ullapool
Myrtle Bank Hotel, Gairloch (S)
Old Inn, Gairloch
Rockvilla Hotel, Lochcarron
Seaforth Bar & Restaurant, Ullapool
Steading Cafe & Restaurant, Gairloch (S)
Strathcarron Hotel

Tigh-an-Eilean Hotel, Shieldaig
Torridon Inn

North Skye & Hebrides

An Lanntair, Stornoway
Bakur Bar, Uig
Bosville Hotel, Portree
Borrodale Hotel, South Uist (S)
Carlton Tavern, Stornoway
Dark Island Hotel, Benbecula (S)
Edinbane Inn
Ferry Inn, Uig
Flodigarry Hotel
Harris Inn, Tarbert (S)
Isles Inn, Portree
Langass Lodge, North Uist (S)
Lochmaddy Hotel, North Uist
The Lodge at Edinbane
Old Schoolhouse Restaurant, Dunvegan (S)
Royal Hotel, Portree
Stein Inn, Waternish
Tigh Dearg Hotel, Lochmaddy, North Uist
Uig Hotel, Uig
Westford Inn, North Uist



*Blackfriars
Highland Pub
& Restaurant
Great Beers*

Traditional Highland Food with Seafood Specials

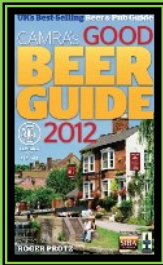
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Scottish & Highland Real Ales & Cider on tap

Open all day, 6 days a week

Food served every day

from 11am until 9pm



Regular Live Entertainment



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South Skye & Lochalsh

Ardvasar Hotel
Clachan Bar, Dornie
Claymore, Broadford
Dunollie Hotel, Broadford
Hebridean Hotel, Broadford
Isle Ormsay Hotel
Jac-o-bite Restaurant, Kintail
Kinloch Castle, Rum
Kintail Lodge Hotel
Old Inn, Carbost
Plockton Hotel, Plockton
Plockton Inn, Plockton
Saucy Mary's Lodge, Kyleakin (S)
Sconsler Lodge Hotel
Sligachan Hotel (S) *Closed October - March*
Taigh Ailean Hotel, Portnalong

Caithness & Sutherland

Achness Hotel, Rosehall, Lairg
Alexander Bain, Wick (*Wetherspoons*)
Altnacealgach Inn, nr. Ledmore Junction (S)

Bay Owl Restaurant, Dunbeath
Belgrave Hotel, Helmsdale
Ben Loyal Hotel, Tongue
The Caberfeidh, Lochinver
Castle Hotel, Dornoch
Castletown Hotel, Castletown
Central Hotel, Thurso
Commercial Hotel, Thurso
Dunroamin Hotel, Bonar Bridge
Eagle Hotel, Dornoch
Golspie Inn (S)
Inchnadamph Hotel (S)
Invershin Hotel
Mackay's Hotel, Wick
Norseman Hotel, Wick
Scourie Hotel, Scourie
Seaview Hotel, John O'Groats
Sutherland Inn, Brora
Tongue Hotel
Trentham Hotel (S)
Ullbster Arms Hotel, Halkirk
The Weigh Inn, Scrabster, Thurso

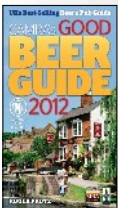
Stein Inn

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Isle of Skye, IV55 8GA
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angus.teresa@steininn.co.uk

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Highlands & Western Isles Pub-of-the-Year 2010



The Castle Tavern

Taigh-òsda à chaisteil

Open all day, food served all day, a great range of Real Ales
At the top of Castle Street, Inverness, overlooking the River Ness
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More Bits and Bobs ...

As well as some of our breweries expanding, the **Castle Tavern** also has expansion plans and we hear that the piece of land beside the

entrance way has been bought to give more space for outside tables. This will provide lots more space as well as giving customers great views across and up the river Ness.

The area of bushes with the Pine tree that will give an open and sometimes sunny area to enjoy.



The following article was written for *The Imbiber* magazine by Mike Hammersley who lives on Skye.

A Highlands and Islands Diary Portree to Stornoway

Whereas most of the *Imbiber's* articles are usually abundant with real ale, I'm afraid mine are rather poverty-stricken, but that's a product of my location.

But it does make the extensive travel and eventual hunting out of a working handpump all the more exciting. In a word it's a challenge!

Such was my trip to Stornoway at the end of April where I only encountered one real ale outlet and one real ale, so to beef this foray up a bit I've included a few boozers en-route.

Portree

The holiday season is in its embryonic stages and rather like the appearance of daffodils, handpumps are beginning to sprout in Portree, but only modestly. The only perennial pump in the village is that in the **Isles Inn**

which serves a house - badged Isle of Skye brewery bitter called, appropriately, **Isles Ale**,



while at the **Merchants Bar** at the Bosville Hotel the manager has been in discussion with the Isle of Skye Brewery about taking on their beers again this summer - but more on that another time.

The other bar which has resuscitated its handpumps in Portree is **McNabs Inn** and this made a convenient starting point for my trip since it is only one minute away from the bus station in Somerled Square. This is a modern, functional but rather mundane bar, especially

as it forms part of the Royal Hotel in Portree and is situated close to the site of the original



inn of the same name in which Flora MacDonald eventually bade farewell to Bonnie Prince Charlie during his wild escape plan after the unsuccessful Jacobite uprising of 1745. But with the tourist season starting, the two pumps proudly displayed beers from the Cuillin Brewery, located just nine miles down the road from Portree at the Sligachan Hotel at the edge of the Cuillin mountains, and as a dark start to my journey I opted for my favourite, **Black Face** a lightly coffeish porter style ale, very easy on the palate.

THE BEERS: Cuillin Brewery **Black Face** 4.3% and **Pinnacle** 4.7%

Uig

Right, it's five minutes past midday and time to catch the number 57 North End circular bus (clockwise) to the ferry port at Uig, coincidentally just where the Isle of Skye Brewery is located! Now I have to cheat a bit here because the bus and ferry schedules didn't allow time for a pint or two before embarkation, so the Uig sortie had to be done on the previous Saturday.

That Saturday, I had taken the bus to Uig - on the other side of the Trotternish peninsula from Portree - in the anticlockwise direction which takes more than twice as long but is the most outstanding journey imaginable and is a visual feast of wild open country, strange geological features and magnificent views across to the distant mountains of Wester Ross and the islands of Rona and Raasay. Once at the apex of the peninsula, the mountains of north Harris become visible (the very spot I would be bound for the following week) as do the

distant peaks of North Uist, which are spread out in all their glory across the horizon on the other side of the Little Minch. Geological distress is apparent all along this coastal route and the constant slipping of rock on parts of a very long escarpment called the Trotternish ridge, which runs parallel to the road for over 20 miles, provides endless surprises in the form of large tortured and displaced rocks: these create enclaves of broken pinnacles, among them the graphically named The Old Man of Storr, The Prison, The Sanctuary and the Quiraing.

After having travelled along this mostly single track road with passing places and roaming sheep, the descent into Uig requires the bus to do a five-point turn on a Z bend above the village before eventually arriving more or less at sea level at the bottom of the hill. This is where I got off the bus to walk the short distance to the Ferry Boat Inn, my first port of call in Uig.

The Ferry Inn (Bistro Bar)

The deceptively-named Bistro Bar forms just



part of the inn itself which also has a restaurant and B&B facilities and is a far cry from any bistro you might find down south. In fact it's just a basic public bar with wood panelled walls, unsophisticated tables and chairs and a smallish counter with two handpumps serving an ever-changing selection of guests, but it does do hot food and has a friendly ambience. I suppose it was christened 'bistro' in order to make people think that Skye is keep-

ing up with southern trends, but I like the place just as it is. A verandah outside provides an outdoor drinking area and a good view across the bay and the pier where the ferries to North Uist and Harris depart, although it is a good 15 minutes walk away. The two beers on tap were extremely rare contenders for Skye hailing from Robinsons and Shepherd Neame. I tried the former and got that familiar Stockport chalkiness down my throat.

THE BEERS: Robinsons **Enigma** 4.3% Shepherd Neame **Early Bird** 4.3%

But just one minute's walk to the ferry is the **Bakur Bar**, the unofficial Isle of Skye Brewery tap, a single storey bar with a restaurant-



cum-lounge bar attached. Basic-looking from outside and functional within with its pool table, adjacent stove fire and chimney pipe and a concession to modernity via mock leather black 'cube' seats and matching comfy settees, you can be certain of a well-kept pint here although there is only one beer available at any one time and that is always a rotating member of the brewery's cask line-up, on my visit it was **Red Cuillin**. I often see a few regulars here, but otherwise the clientele are mainly backpackers or tourists off for a stint in the Outer Hebrides, a category into which I was to fall the following week.

THE BEER: Isle of Skye **Red Cuillin** 4.2%

On to Stornoway

I struggled down the pier against a strong blustery wind blowing off the sea and boarded Calmac's 'Hebridean' or 'Innse Gall' - its

Gaelic name - one of about only half a dozen people in the rear lounge and I duly noted the onboard line-up of bottled beers available, all from the Hebridean Brewery in Stornoway - **Clansman Ale** (4.1%), **Celtic Black** (4.7%) and **Islander Premier** (4.8%).

After a slightly choppy crossing we reached the port of Tarbert on the Isle of Harris on time. This is an intriguing little village sandwiched beneath high hills and mountains on a land bridge between Loch a Siar and Loch an Tairbearit, the name Tarbert signifying a short bridge of land between two lochs, hence so many places called Tarbert in Scotland. The **Harris Inn** just up the road is listed as selling real ale but on this mid-afternoon it was closed, just leaving the **Hebridean Hotel** bar by the ferry terminal which has a handpump but no draught beer!

The connecting road journey to Stornoway takes an hour and as you leave Tarbert the scenery is magnificent, the mini-coach straining up the steep incline to parallel Loch a Mhorghain through the north Harris mountains which look forlorn and wild, their slopes covered in boulders and every once in a while I caught a glimpse of the big daddy of them all, Clisham. The country levelled out into undulating moorland as we crossed into the Isle of Lewis passing dozens of lochans which lend themselves to the name of this area of Lewis, 'Lochs'.

An Lanntair

(The Lantern)

A soon as I had booked into my B&B in Straid Coinneach or Kenneth Street, as all of the road and street signs in the Outer Hebrides are predominately in Gaelic with a small English translation beneath, it was down to the bar in the arts centre, **An Lanntair**, about the most modern building in Stornoway with dean Scandinavian



lines. The stylish bar was on the first floor its rear wall festooned with posters for events past and present. My heart quickened at the sight of a handpump with a pumpclip attached advertising Hebridean **Islander Ale**, the only problem was that an empty glass was hung over the top of the pump and I think everyone knows what that means! But two bottled beers were placed in front of the pump - Hebridean **Celtic Black** and **Islander Ale**, both of which I tried and both of which I found very fruity in character the former bearing just a hint of bitterness while the latter I found to be a bit thin in body leaving a slightly watery bitterness - oh, if I only could have tried the draught versions!

The Criterion

No real ale here either, but I hadn't come for the beer but for the experience of travelling back in time by sixty years or so. Listed in CAMRA's *Scotland's True Heritage Pubs* I had a strange sense of déjà vu when entering, although I had never visited Stornoway before. This familiarity remains a mystery although the bar does feature in the novel *The Blackhouse* by Peter May which I had read last year and in which, from his description, I formed a mental image of the place - one which turned out to be amazingly and weirdly accurate it would seem! It was all a bit strange like the ghost aeroplane I saw on the runway at Stornoway Air-



port, one minute it was there the next there was no sign of it and it hadn't taken off - and it was white! Most of the bar fittings in **The Criterion** remain in their original 1930s state in this small single bar pub - well worth a visit

for pure nostalgia alone even though I had to make do with Guinness. In fact many of the pubs in Stornoway - and I visited most of them - are relatively unspoilt and any concession to modernity is usually cosmetic, most of them retaining much of their original Victorian ambience and quirkiness as indeed does much of the town with its family-run shops and very sociable locals, many of whom converse in Gaelic. Very few corporate chain stores here, no shopping malls, just like a town from my youth!

The Carlton Public Bar



This is the only regular real ale outlet in Stornoway and it is a rather strange and primitive little bar with its obligatory pool table, odd 'S'-shaped bar counter, providing a break from conformity, and pine-panelled walls. I was hoping for some Hebridean draught ale which they are noted for selling but found on this occasion an offering from one of my home breweries but one I hadn't tried before, **Cuillin Gorm**, a rather sweetish fruit beer with a hint of molasses. THE BEER: Isle of Skye **Cuillin Gorm** 4.0%

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I'll be back

On my brief visit I also managed to travel down to see the Callanish stone circles, visit the Lews Castle grounds and the Lohaire Memorial as well as the current art exhibition in An Lanntair and locate the Hebridean Brewery. The daily cleaning lady at my B&B told me that she used to work as a marketing assistant at the brewery and suggested that I give Andy Ribbens, the head brewer, a ring and arrange a brewery tour - so watch this space! *Sláinte Mhath!*

A big thank you to Mike for supplying the above article and this nicely fills the void of information that we get about the status of our pubs and real ale availability in the largest of our Western Isles.

The photos of the various bars described in the article are from their respective web sites. — Ed.



Highlands & Islands Brewers in 2012

Orkney Brewery - Brewing commenced in March 1988, at the old schoolhouse in Orkney Mainland.

Isle of Skye Brewery - Based at Uig, by the Western Isles ferry terminal, brewing since December 1995. Ales include Red & Black Cuillin, Young Pretender Hebridean Gold, and Blaven. Seasonal, House, and special event ales are brewed. (see advert)



Valhalla Brewery - Most northerly brewery in the UK, brewing on Unst since December 1997. Ales include White Wife and Auld Rock.

Black Isle Brewery - Started brewing in December 1998 in converted farm buildings. Ales include Red Kite and Yellowhammer. Organic ales are a speciality. Much enlarged, new brewery opened 2011.

Isle of Arran Brewery - Located close to Brodick Castle. Opened in late March 2000. Ales include Blonde, Dark, and Sunset.



Fyne Ales Brewery - Based in Argyll, at the head of Loch Fyne, brewing started on St Andrew's Day 2001. Ales include Piper's Gold and Maverick. Revamping this year—see advert.



Cairngorm Brewery Company - Set up in late 2001 to market the beers of the Tomintoul & Aviemore breweries, which they own. Ales include Trade Winds, Wildcat, Stag, Highland IPA, and Black Gold. Seasonal ales are regularly brewed. (see advert)

Hebridean Brewing Company - Based at Stornoway in the Outer Hebrides. Brewing since January 2002. Beers include Islander Strong Ale, Berserker Export Pale Ale, and Clansman Ale (first ale ever brewed in Stornoway).

Atlas Brewery - Closed. Brewing moved to Orkney late in 2010.

An Teallach Brewery - Moved to the family's croft, near Dundonnell, in March 2003. Ales include An Teallach Ale, Beinn Dearg Ale, and Crofter's Pale Ale.



Islay Ales Co Ltd - Established in an old Tractor Shed in Bridgend, in March 2004. Ales include Finlaggan, Black Rock, and Dun Hogs Head; plus seasonal brews.

Cuillin Brewery - The brewery was born on 10th September 2004, in the old public bar of the Sligachan Hotel. Skye, Eagle and Pinnacle Ales are brewed.

Highland Brewing Company - Located in the old Swannay cheese factory at Birsay, on Orkney Mainland. Ales include Scapa Special, Orkney Blast, Dark Munro among others.

Isle of Mull Brewery - From May 2005 in Tobermory. Sold plant to Oban Bay in 2009.

Sinclair Breweries Ltd - Formed in 2006 by local hotelier and restaurateur Norman Sindair, who purchased the **Orkney** and **Atlas** Breweries. Ales regularly brewed include Three Sisters, Latitude, and Nimbus from Atlas; plus Raven Ale, Dark Island, Red MacGregor, and Skull Splitter from Orkney. (see advert)



Glenfinnan Brewery - Brewing on a 4 bbl plant since October 2006 - Regular brews are Glenfinnan Gold, The Standard Ale, and Glenfinnan Dark (for the Winter).

Colonsay Brewery - First brews in March 2007. IPA, 80/- and Lager (no real ales).

Plockton Brewery - The first brew was produced on 1st April 2007. Craggs Ale and Starboard IPA may usually be found in Plockton, and at other local outlets.

Oban Bay Brewery - Brewing since mid 2009. 5 barrel brewery attached to Cuan Mor.

Old Inn (Gairloch) Brewery - 100 litre micro-brewery. First brews in February 2010.

Loch Ness Brewery - First brews in September 2011. RedNess, HoppyNess, Dark..... Etc, etc

Cromarty Brewery - First brews in December 2011. Happy Chappy, Brewed Awakening, Red Rocker

Not all of the breweries listed are in our branch area: the Highland Brewing Co, Valhalla and Orkney are all in the Aberdeen, Grampian & Northern Isles area; the Arran Brewery falls in the Ayrshire & Galloway area; while Fyne, Islay, Mull, Colonsay & Oban Bay Breweries are covered by Glasgow & West Scotland. Similarly for Highlands & Islands pubs listed in the GBG; pubs in Orkney and Shetland are submitted by the Aberdeen, Grampian & Northern Isles Branch, and the Clachaig Inn somehow falls within the Glasgow & West Scotland branch area!

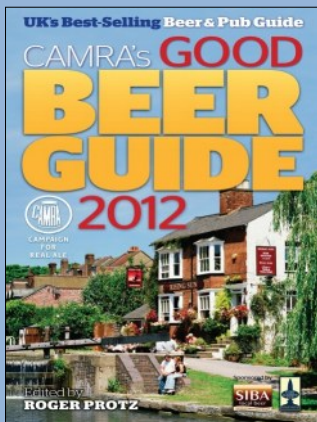
The Kings Highway



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Inverness
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160 pints of hand pulled



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2012**

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We have 10 hand pulls on which you will always find:

Greene King's Abbot &

Caledonian's Deuchars IPA

As well as beers from our 'regulars'

Cairngorm Brewing Company, Houston Brewery,

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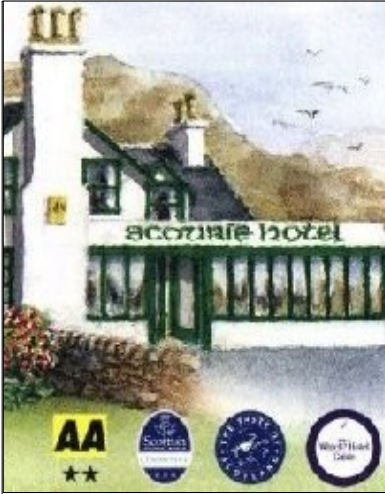
Ales now at a new price of £1.99.

All ales served in an ale pot unless otherwise requested.

Rooms available too - best deals online

Search on-line: **Kings Highway, Inverness.**





Scourie Hotel

Scourie, Sutherland, IV27 4SX

Tel: 01971 502396

FAX: 01971 502423

patrick@scourie-hotel.co.uk

www.scourie-hotel.co.uk

Cask Ales and Real Cider are served

An ideal base for game fishing, hill-walking, bird watching (Handa Island is nearby), or exploring the famed empty quarter of Western Sutherland, a lunar landscape of lochs and mountains.

Overlooking Scourie Bay and with views to the distant tops of Ben Stack, Arkle, and Foinaven.



To connoisseurs of game fishing

there is simply nothing to compare to the 25,000 acres of Loch, River and Hill Loch fishing held for the guests of Scourie Hotel. The Hotel has 36 fishing beats held exclusively for guests, plus 3 beats on Loch Stack and Loch More for sea trout and salmon. Additional salmon fishing is taken on local salmon rivers.

WESTFORD INN

Claddach Kirkibost, North Uist HS6 5EP
Telephone 01876 580 653

A small, traditional pub (established 1896), part of a historic listed eighteenth century house set in its own grounds on the west coast of North Uist in the Outer Hebrides. Opposite Kirkibost Island on the A865, between the Kirkibost Centre and Balranald bird reserve, 15 minutes drive from Lochmaddy ferry terminal.

Real ale from the award winning Isle of Skye Brewery. Range of bottled ales and malts. Simple home cooked pub food. Good Beer Guide Listed every year from 2008 to 2012

Summer opening 2012, midday to 11:00pm (Sunday 12.30pm to 10.30pm). Kitchen open 12.30pm until 2.30pm, and in the evening from 6pm to 9pm.

Outside seating; real fires in inclement weather.

Accommodation available in small stone cottage in grounds.

Dog friendly



The view from The North

Inverness & District

North

Castle Hotel, Portmahomack.



Real Ale continues to be available in this scenic village which is unique by virtue of the fact that it is the only one in the north east of Scotland that faces west. A visit was paid on 12th May when a couple of pints of Cromarty **Happy Chappy** were enjoyed. It was a change from Cairngorm Trade Winds. There is one handpump and the owner intends alternating between these two ales. The Happy Chappy is a favourite with the females. £3.50 a pint is being charged for this locally brewed ale with the quality ranging from 1 to 3.

Photo from their website:

<http://castle.portmahomack.net/>

Commercial Inn (Com), Balintore. A visit was paid on 1st May 2012, when there was no longer cask ale available but bottles of Deuchars were selling despite the locals sticking stubbornly to their Tennents Ember and Ice Cold Tennents Lager. However, all is not bad – Cromarty **Happy Chappy** became available on handpump from 15th May.

Caithness & Sutherland

Eagle Hotel, Dornoch. It re-opened

early April 2012 following refurbishment. A visit was paid on 7th April when 2 ales from The Cromarty Brewing Company were on sale, namely **Happy Chappy** at 4.1% and **Brewed Awakening** Coffee Infused Stout at 4.7%. Both ales merited at rating of 3. A change from these regulars is planned from time to time.

Whilst the emphasis is on food (seems to be the trend), there is still a small area for those of us remaining who do not like menus thrust upon us and who simply wish to enjoy a natter and a few real ales.

Castle Hotel, Dornoch.

It is indeed an unfortunate discovery to find out that this establishment is in the habit of closing to the public when booked for events such as wedding receptions. I was somewhat stunned to be refused access one Friday evening and again on a Saturday afternoon. **JD**

Sounds like a phone call would be a wise precaution if you are planning to travel any distance hoping for a good pint.—Ed.

Another Bit or Bob

In early May, Jim at The Anderson put on a mini beer festival with a difference. Calling it The Tactical Illusion Beer Festival, he put on beers that were not what they seemed:

Durham Brewery **White Stout** (7.2%) - a very pale, full bodied strong beer—strong and true,

Harviestoun **Schiehallion** (4.8%) - cask conditioned lager,

Fyne Ales **Black IPA** (5.5%) - a black pale?! Ale.

Jim also had on a keg beer—Mikkellar Sleepover (10.5%) - from Denmark.

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Focus onTracy Tomlinson
Tracy and her husband Sean
have now opened Tomlinsons' Cas-
tle Street Beer Shop in Inverness.



They live in Rosemarkie.

Q. Where are you originally from?
Well I'm a Yorkshire Lass, born and bred, from Pontefract, home of Liquorice growing, Horse racing (we have the longest flat course in Europe) , Pits and Tomlinson's Liquorice Stout.

Q. Why/when did you move to the Highlands?

The weather of course ha ha, where else in the world can you get all four seasons in one day? Sean moved up here to work at The Black Isle Brewery.

Q. How were you introduced to real ale?

By Sean, he refused to buy me lager when we met (30 years ago now WOW) so if I wanted a night out I had to drink Real Ale. Don't laugh, but I remember the days when we would drive for miles for a pint of Boddingtons, but then again back in the day Boddies was worth it.

Q. When and why did you join CAM-
RA?

Oh gosh, in the late 80s early 90s, we had always followed the Good Beer Guide, in fact our biking/camping (that's motorbike not anything exerting like a bicycle) trips were always planned round the Guide.

Q. What are your favourite beers/
styles?

Hmmmmm I have quite varied tastes, I just love Mauldons Black Adder, a big fan of Cotleigh Beers, I've always enjoyed the Durham brews too and of course I can't forget hubbys White Lady and Wild Cat, not forgetting Liquorice Stout, I don't mind hoppy beers but I do prefer the maltier ones though I've just discovered Thornbridge Kipling and OMG love it.

Q. Why open a beer shop in Inver-
ness?

To escape the children, have you met my kids? No seriously we saw the need in Inverness and the surrounding areas several years ago and have just been waiting for the right place and time .

Q. What beers do you sell?

We have a large range of Belgian beers, a decent selection of Germans, a large selection of Scottish, British, American, three Australian, one new Zealand, One Canadian, one South African and are hoping to add other countries very soon, not forgetting a good selection of Ciders and I am trying to get together a decent selection of Gluten Free. Though when this comes out I will probably have several other countries in stock.

Q. What hobbies/interest do you
have?

Well I love my garden, that's where I relax and do my thinking and I enjoy reading. I find my children and grand-daughter quite fascinating and they



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seem to take up most of my time but I think my favourite thing is taking a day off and having a good blast through the countryside with Sean on the Ducati.

Q. What is your favourite part of Scotland?

Without a doubt my fav place is Kinlochewe, I love the views and scenery up there summer and winter.

Q. What is your favourite song/singer/group?

Like my beer I'm quite varied again, I've always loved Clapton, I like Snow Patrol, Greenday, Dixie Chicks oh and throw in a bit of Oasis and Commitments, I choose my music to my mood at the time.

Q. Favourite film?

Ahhh now here I'm really old fashioned, love Casablanca (makes me cry), Marnie (who can resist Connery and Tippy is just great in this film too), The King and

I (sorry but I've always had a thing about Yul Brynner) Unfortunately I seem to spend most of my time watching son Rory's vast collection of Dr Who.

Q. Favourite book?

Here we go again, I read just about anything and everything though I do like to collect Robert Jordan's Wheel of Time series and cant resist Ian Rankin's Inspector Rebus books.

Q. What further plans have you for your Beer Shop?

Plans, well I cant wait to widen the range we sell, I would like to add more countries, get the cask ale and cider on the go and set up a home delivery service, buy more shops, make lots of money, employ staff and ride off into the sunset on a new Ducati!

Hosting Scotland & Northern Ireland Branches meeting

On the 19th of May it was Highlands & Western Isles turn to host the quarterly meeting of CAMRA Scotland & Northern Ireland Branches.

Over twenty members from the other Branches joined two committee members from H&W.I in the upstairs of the Castle Tavern in Inverness, very kindly left for our use by George & Veronica on what was a busy football Saturday due to the Scottish Cup final being played.

In between updates after cheers

from downstairs, we covered a lot of policy and campaigning issues and were very pleased to welcome CAMRA chairman Colin Valentine who was representing the National Executive at the meeting.

As well as enjoying the good range of Scottish ales on offer, in excellent condition as you would expect at the Tavern, a tasty buffet was provided by our hosts.

Many thanks to George & Veronica for their hospitality and providing an excellent meeting venue.

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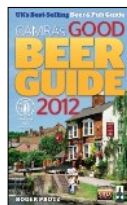
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Highland Beers "race" to ASCOT

Some of our branch members go a long way to try beer and for a couple of our committee, they also like to have a flutter on



the gee-gees. Ascot race course is the venue for their eponymous Beer Festival held in early October (5th and 6th this year) and last year the weather was amazingly good making the trip even better. Among it's several bars, the

festival has a "regional" bar and this year it is featuring beers from our area. 36 beers from the following are planned to be transported down; **Orkney, Highland, Isle of Skye, Caimgorm, Loch Ness, Fyne Ales, Inveralmond, Cromarty, An Teallach, Valhalla, Colonsay and Plockton.** If you have the time and the where-with-all, it is a recommended and different kind of beer festival with horse racing so you can have a flutter as well!



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FIGHT BACK TO SAVE YOUR PINT

SIGN THE BEER TAX E-PETITION

It's time to save your pint and fight back against this year's budget which saw the Government continue its damaging policy of the beer duty escalator.

Every year beer tax increases by 2% above inflation meaning your pint in the pub costs you 5-10p more. This mounting pressure is contributing to the closure of 16 pubs every single week.

CAMRA is calling **all** beer drinkers and pub goers to sign an online e-petition today by visiting camra.org.uk/saveyourpint.

We need 100,000 signatures to trigger a high profile Parliamentary debate and put pressure on the Government ahead of Budget 2013.

To stand a chance of doing this we need your help in reaching as many people as possible. So please sign the petition and then spread the word.

CAMRA also has free material to take down your local and join the campaign. Email claire.cain@camra.org.uk to order free beer mats and posters.*

With around £1 on every pint going to the Treasury in beer duty and VAT, it's time to save your pint and call time on the beer duty escalator!

*One pubs pack contains 5 x A4 posters and 100 beer mats, please let Claire know how many pubs packs you would like.

Branch Diary (Meetings start at 7.30 pm)

(All these events are open to members and any non member, including committee meetings.)

Thurs 28th June - Sat 30th June - Scottish Traditional Beer Festival - Corn Exchange, Edinburgh

Tues 10th July - Committee Meeting - Caledonian Hotel, Fort Augustus

Tues 24th July - 5.00 pm  Loch Ness Circular

Tues 14th August—Committee Meeting— Argyll Hotel, Ullapool

Tues 28th Aug—Tasting Panel—Cawdor Tavern

Tues 11th Sept—Committee Meeting— Castle Hotel, Dornoch

Fri 21st—Sat 29th Sept—11th Loch Ness beer festival, Benleiva Hotel, Drumnadrochit *

Sat 22nd Sept—Branch Social—11th Loch Ness beer festival—2 p.m.

Tues 9th Oct—Committee Meeting—The Anderson, Fortrose

* Not all events listed are necessarily organised by CAMRA.

This diary is as much about the local Real Ale scene as about Branch activities.



CAMRA Needs YOU!

Protect your pleasure! Become actively involved with your local branch.

We need your help! Not a massive time commitment, just an hour or two will help our small committee in supporting the local publicans and brewers who together provide us with such a wonderful range of real ales to enjoy.

Please see our regularly updated on-line diary at highlandcamra.org.uk

We have a new WEB SITE!! After 18 months of construction, our new Highlands & Western Isles web site is online! It features;

an elegant, photo-led design; Interactive Pub Map; Archive of Awards;

Link to current CAMRA campaigns; New TWITTER feed;

New BLOG POTY and BOTY voting along with SUBMIT YOUR BEER SCORES will be added soon! Go to highlandcamra.org.uk

Contact Details



Gareth Hardman (Secretary & Branch Contact) - 01463 238462
18, Scorguie Gardens, Inverness, IV3 8SS.

contact@highlandcamra.org.uk or secretary@highlandcamra.org.uk

Eric Mills - 01456 459343
chair@highlandcamra.org.uk

Gordon Streets — 01463 715637
news@highlandcamra.org.uk

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01/06

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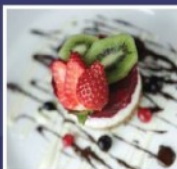
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Karen Gillan of Dr Who Fame talking to Grazia magazine



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Drink Real Ale in a pub? - Rate the Beer!

Highlands & Western Isles CAMRA needs your help in surveying the pubs in our massive Branch area. To tell us which pubs are worth considering for the Good Beer Guide, use CAMRA's 6-point NBSS (National Beer Scoring Scheme) to record Beer Quality.

What do the scores mean?

0 - Undrinkable. No cask ale available or so poor you have to take it back or can't finish it.

1 - Poor. Beer that is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable resentment.

2 - Average. Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn't inspire in any way, not worth moving to another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing.

3 - Good. Good beer in good form. You may cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again.

4 - Very Good. Excellent beer in excellent condition.

5 - Excellent. Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.

Simply email us which bar, the beer(s) and your scores plus any real ale and real cider news to our Branch Contacts (See Diary page).



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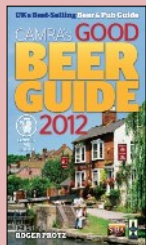
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"What's Yours Then?" is a quarterly newsletter produced by the Highlands & Western Isles Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale. The views & opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the editor, CAMRA, nor its Branches.

We hope you have enjoyed reading our Summer newsletter. Unless you intend to keep it for some reason, please **DO NOT** throw it away. Why not pass it on to a friend, or just leave it in a pub somewhere for others to read. Newsletters are often found many miles from source! The next edition will be out in **October**.



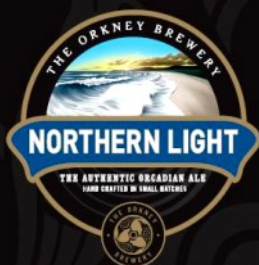
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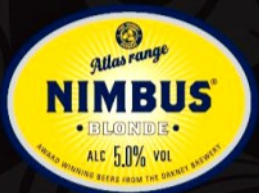
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